INTERVIEW WITH GINNY WOOD
BY ROGER KAYE NOVEMBER 10, 2002

MR. KAYE: This is an oral history interview with Virginia Hill Wood. It is being conducted in her home in College, Alaska on November 10, 2002 by Roger Kaye. The subject of this interview today is Ginny and Celia's role in, and remembrances about establishment of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. So Ginny tell me just briefly about when you first heard about the effort to establish what is now the Arctic Refuge as a wilderness.

MS. WOOD: I don't know whether we heard it from George Collins and Lowell Sumner who were our contacts. We kept running into them. Of course, Lowell has a little airplane, and we had a little plane. They were parked together down on the park strip when he was up here. It may have been the Muries. We knew Olaus because he'd come up and visit his brother. But before we ever met Mardy, or ever was introduced to their concept of saving the Refuge, we had [Abe?] Murie. I don't know, have you read that new book that's just come out *Changing Tracks*?

MR. KAYE: Yes.

MS. WOOD: That's interesting. The concept of wilderness, when it changed from being some place where it's just wild; the European concept, it's just a desolate place, to this is a 'what it incorporates and what it meant' is something that gradually came. I realized that I probably had it as a little kid. I liked to be where there weren't a lot of people. But I never, was aware of the concept of wilderness. When we were asked to go and testify, then whatever I said, that's what I was thinking at the time.

MR. KAYE: So how did you become involved, yourself, in the campaign?

MS. WOOD: Well really what happened is that after these assorted people including Bob Weedon who was just working for Fish and Wildlife then I think, and had been up here doing his thesis for his Doctorate; and Fred and Dave Kline who was a graduate student then, we were asked because we were neighbors of Fred's. They asked us to come on over. They wanted some people there who could get out and testify. So then, I had some concept of wilderness by just being a bush pilot and flying over all of this vastness. I was beginning to get a concept that wilderness is someplace that hasn't been cluttered up with people. Woody and I started changing our minds; we wanted a camp where people came and went out in it and got a concept and weren't out fighting the wilderness. But what Bartlett, who was, it was right after Statehood….but what I wanted to mention was that we were out in the hall afterwards, after we had been asked to say something. We heard over and over from the other people who came; the miners and businessmen. The theme of their talks was that they didn't want outside environmental organizations telling us how to run Alaska. The Sierra Club, the

Wilderness Society and the Wildlife Federation were the ones that they mostly knew about. I don't know who idea it was, Bob Wheedon or Fred's or who, but they said 'why don't we start' the only conservation movement then was more or less like what the Outdoor Council has. There was a guy named Bud Boddie down in Juneau who was well known. But he was beginning to get a little worried about timber cutting where it would bother the fishing, or maybe over-shooting game. But wilderness was not a…but they didn't like any of those organizations. What Woody and I had been members of the Sierra Club mainly because we liked to go skiing up at the lodges that they had. It was more of an outing club when we first joined it. We got their literature. That's where we decided to form an organization that you have to be eligible to vote, and had voted in either the Territory of Alaska or the new State of Alaska in order to be a voting member. You could contribute some money if you wanted to, but to be able to vote, they wanted members to be able to say they were Alaskans and we vote here. This represents our feelings, and it's our land. I think that's when we decided that we couldn't depend on of the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society, it had to come from inside.

MR. KAYE: So that was the Alaska Conservation Society?

MS. WOOD: Yes, and fortunately all of these people were Biologists. We had the, when we went to testify on things after that, the first thing was to establish the Arctic National Wildlife Range. I think that whether we'd met Collins and Lowell and the Muries, where they came in I don't remember, somewhere along there in the background too that we met just because we were down at the camp at McKinley Park, and they all came through. We always just ran into them. Lowell, when we met, we always talked about airplanes with. It was he and George that went up and took some of those early rafting trips down those rivers and they didn't know anything about that in those days! It happened that most of the membership and most of the board members were people like Fred, Bob Wheedon, a guy down in Juneau, I can't think of his name now; he established the whole conservation [department] at the University of California at Santa Cruz. He was a giant in the early days, and he was on the board. We'd go to hearings, and because we'd always run our testimony through one of these guys to be sure we had the facts right. We could go to hearings and the reaction would be, "Where did these people come from? How do they know that?" When everybody else was going on just absolute greed and were absolutely illiterate as far as ecology was concerned. I don't know when the term 'ecology' came into my vocabulary. It was somewhere along the way, probably from reading Aldo Leopold.

MR. KAYE: And you discovered Leopold when you or Woody worked for Denali Park?

MS. WOOD: They had a very limited library there and they had an old copy of it. I read it and was very impressed. Before that I had read a lot of Indian lore as a youth and Thoreau I had read and loved. Then I was weathered in in Galena for seventeen days and we were staying at somebody's house there. It was the CAA house because they were

out and they wanted somebody to keep the water running in there and flush the toilets so it wouldn't freeze. I was in there and that's where I first read Bob Marshall's work. The first was his book on Arctic Village. But then, there was another one that he wrote later that told of his travels. That really sparked my interest in wild Alaska. And just flying over it. And just the vastness of it. It's different from when you are flying over the States. I was ferrying planes during the War. There was always a field you could…

MR. KAYE: What is it about Marshall's writings that touched you?

MS. WOOD: Just his zest for seeing what was over the next ridge, which was mine as a kid.

MR. KAYE: Was it that sense of horizons unexplored and discovery?

MS. WOOD: Yeah, and he was a good writer. And as I said my early thing was a zest for adventure and seeing what's over the hill. I always did, and still do camp when I could get time off. I explored. I have been to the head of every river down there. Sometimes I was by myself or with one of the staff. I just wanted to see. I was curious. Then you begin to, when we were in camp, we began to feel…first you have to deal with nature as sort of an adversary. The bridges will wash out, and so you have to wade the rivers. You don't close up in time and the big snow comes and you're stuck out there, and can't get over the road. People ask me what was my vision in camp. We didn't have any vision. We just wanted to spend the summer there, and Woody wanted to finish climbing Mount McKinley, which he did. He was with the group that made the first traverse of the mountain. He had this childhood of just exploring the woods of Maine until he found Colorado. Then, he was doing it in the Army. Then is was his solace, hiking in the …. I know that mostly, in camp we used to think that we needed to develop McKinley Park because there was no facilities for people. There wasn't anything. Then we began to ask if we really wanted to do that. It began changing. We had opportunities, and we couldn't start a camp with no money. We tried to borrow some at the Bank and they said, 'that's not worth anything', we couldn't borrow anything on it. And that was good because we never had to pay back anybody. We always paid our bills in October from what we charged during the summer. But I think the concept that, 'Wait a minute, this is a place where you can make a headquarters and stay and get immersed in what's out there' we decided not to have a TV, not to had a bar. This was not because we were teetotalers, but mainly because we didn't want to see beer cans all the way back along the highway. Nature was telling us what we were doing wrong. I always remember Conrad's writings of the sea saying that the sea is not for you or against you it's just very unforgiving of errors. That's what flying is in the north, and that's what mountain climbing it. I had done a lot of mountain climbing and skiing in the northwest. Whether you are climbing a mountain like Rainer or Baker, or skiing then was going cross-country on your skis to the highest mountain you could find to ski down on. But it was getting

away from tows and from where everybody else was skiing. We didn't say, "Oh, I want to go out in the wilderness".

MR. KAYE: How about the idealism? I am reading the Conservation Review that you edited here for ACS. You are always quoting Leopold and Marshall here, particularly Leopold. When did you first discover him?

MS. WOOD: It was that first year when Woody and I were down at McKinley in the Library. There was no road. All we had was the plane to get out of there. There was no road that came into McKinley so you were pretty much…and somebody left us a copy there. I still have it. I took it!

MR. KAYE: You once told that you had Aldo Leopold's *Sancony Almanac* on your bedstand through the Arctic Refuge campaign.

MS. WOOD: Yeah.

MR. KAYE: That must have influenced the way you thought about that place.

MS. WOOD: Well, he was as you know was marvelous writer. He had a way of saying things. He just had a way with words. I could have read the same thing and it could have been deadly dull. But his writings, and I keep reading it over and over. I think everybody should read it once a year, just to … You find new meanings and new expressions. Just in one paragraph he can say something so succinctly. There again, his wilderness was a little farm up in Wisconsin, except when he was first working for the Forest Service. Everybody remembers that story about when he stopped being a wolf hunter. That dying wolf, the last green light in that wolf's eye. But then he became an ecologist. Shooting wolves meant that there was going to be an overproduction of deer. My concepts of that started then. Being able to use words so beautifully to describe something. He had such a down to earth, hands on concept. And where he got his concepts of ecosystems and how that works, and controls and so forth. So that was my beginning of some formal biology. When you first came up in the wintertime, you went to courses at the University, everybody did. The average age there was forty. They were waiting for jobs to open up in the summer. I took a course in ecology. Odom was the textbook. The guy was not a very good lecturer, but he did expose me to the learned part of biology and ecology. Odom's textbook was excellent on that. I still have it. Just the fundamentals of looking at how everything is connected to everything else and the fundamentals of ecology. I really, that took everything of others that had just been philosophical and put it in a background of. .. since then I have collected and I have a big library.

MR. KAYE: I've got a copy here of your testimony in 1959 before the Senate Sub-Committee that held hearings here in Alaska on the proposal to establish the Arctic

Refuge. You make the statement, "Wilderness is of the highest importance to science as a standard for reference. It is a laboratory where biologists of today and the future can study to find answers to the reoccurring question, what was the natural order before man changed it?" Did you get those ideas from Leopold and your Ecology classes?

MS. WOOD: I can't tell you now. But I did…I forget when Alaska was a Territory and when it was a State. Yes, I had taken that class by then. We established the Conservation society and I told you why. All of the guys that were in it were biologists or botanists. I was one of the few people involved that didn't have a formal degree in it. We had been exposed to it.

MR. KAYE: So, you thought that this was an important purpose of setting the Arctic Refuge aside?

MS. WOOD: Yeah! And I suppose that what I was thinking then, I must have expressed better than I could now. You can read that, instead of listening to me!

MR. KAYE: At that time, did you plan on going up and actually experiencing the Arctic Refuge? Or, were you motivated perhaps more for other reasons?

MS. WOOD: At that time, except, and I quit flying commercially then because my daughter was born in 1956. You can't be weathered in in a place when you're nursing a kid! Woody had a commercial license too, but he didn't do it much. We had a plane at camp. We couldn't have built a camp without a plane. There was no road connecting the McKinley Park to it. But I think that probably operating Camp Denali when we were trying to working…for instance the first thing we did was to go up and drag some logs down to use for foundations for our tent cabins with old military Jeep which was the only car we owned then, up over the tundra. And what did that do but go down to the mineral soil? And the next thing we knew we had a creek coming down through camp. You don't do that. Then, just that we didn't sell beer at camp. We could have made a lot. We needed money badly, but then we'd see all of those tin cans all the way back to…then our feeling more and more was that what we were doing, like our experience in Europe, giving people a place to stay and not just come one night. They could stay and get immersed in nature. Finally, the first thing I did when everybody came was I took them on a hike to what I called the "clover ponds", where they spent the day just going from pond to pond and seeing what was in them. It's not a hard hike, and you are walking on tundra. You point out things like, "where you are walking, that's one of our willows". Then you get, without making it a formal thing, because I didn't have a degree in it, but what happened was be sure you know what you're talking about if you make a statement. Because you may have somebody that is the head of a department, or has his Ph. D., or wrote a book on that subject. People that came to camp, they were the ones that taught me. This was what they did. They enjoyed being in a place like that, but they knew ecology. They were birders. They were people [knowledgeable]. I learned an

awful lot from the people that came there who had degrees, when I started thinking about the science of wilderness.

MR. KAYE: So your motivation for getting involved in the refuge campaign, was it because you wanted to go there and experience it as wilderness, or were there other [reasons]?

MS. WOOD: I guess I didn't think about that. Because when I had done my flying when I first came up here, that's how I made a living was flying charter. It was mostly up to Nome and Kotzebue and we'd get weathered in in little native villages. You should know about that. It was just flying over this country and just looking at it. Before I came to Alaska right after I got out of the War and even during the War when I was ferrying planes, everybody else was going where there were fields to land in. I was exploring. I can remember flying P-51's and P-38's that had never been in the air before and taking them over the Sierras, even in the desert and over the Red Rock country in New Mexico on the way to Newark, New Jersey to deliver the planes. I was always looking down to find places that I'd want to go hiking when the War was over. I did go back and find some of those very places I looked down at.

MR. KAYE: In the mid 1950's when you got involved, what was it, that you thought you'd go to this place and have fun there? Or was it something broader?

MS. WOOD: We started camp in 1952. We staked it out in 1951. The summer before that I was down in Katmi. I had flown for Wing Airlines and some local people charter. I had taken stuff out to Nome and Kotzebue. I had looked down on a lot of wilderness and I thought that it would be fun to, you know, paddle that river. It was the concept of being on the ground and exploring that, that would entertain me. Besides, it was a good way to remember landmarks. In seat of your pants flying, you pay attention to the ground. They don't anymore, they just dial it. I think it was like sight seeing from the air. And even when I was down in the southwest, I was always looking. And I was always saying how that would be fun to explore on foot. I often deviated from the course I was supposed to be on because I wanted to see over the next hill or look at those interesting rocks. I guess it was, as I said, a sense of curiosity and adventure, and just wanted to see what it looked like from the ground to feel it and to smell it.

MR. KAYE: At this time in the 1950s and you are working with ACS did you plan to actually go there necessarily?

MS. WOOD: No, I didn't see how there would be any opportunity because you wouldn't want to go there in the wintertime. I mean, I didn't hanker to be the first one there, or on a dog team trip. No, it was the concept of having someplace that maybe some day…. But it wasn't one of those places that I had seen from the air and wanted to

get on the ground. I was busy in McKinley Park exploring. There was just nobody else in the Park but us. And I never ran into anyone else.

MR. KAYE: So tell me about the concept that appealed to you, of protecting this place. Was it just knowing that it would be there?

MS. WOOD: I think at that time, it was the fact that I was beginning to get, without expressing it orally, the we were getting too clever, but weren't very smart. We don't have wisdom, but we are very clever, and so our technology is running ahead of us. I think Mardy, maybe I read it out of her book, but she said that her reason was for some place where you leave nature alone and it is devoid of technology. After World War II we began to have all of these mechanical things. Too many people were getting too rich and using technology to either develop resources or for pleasure. You need some places that nobody has done anything to. Then, I was beginning to read and take courses in ecology and the concept of it. I don't know which came first. But the idea that if for nothing else, how are you going to know how to fix something if you don't know what it was like originally and what nature is doing? There is that concept that nature has it's own economy. It's the economy of nature. Sure, it's tooth and claw but it has its rhythms. We go in and try to fix it, we build roads and people come and throw their garbage around. So pretty soon you'll never know what your baseline was, what it was like. Then of course, that was the whole thing with Project Chariot. That became one of the first things we took up when we organized. That was they wanted to put this nuclear explosion up to show that they could use it for peaceful uses. The idea that using a nuclear bomb for peaceful uses, well, that wasn't what the military wanted. They just wanted to get a bigger explosion that people weren't complaining about like they were in Nevada. They said that that was their idea. Well this is wilderness, and it won't hurt anybody so we can make them as big as well can to see what happens. Then when they came up to sell it to the University, so they would back it, of course the University did but not people that worked on it. Then of course a lot of my friends, the biologists that were working out there said, "Wait a minute, you've picked this place which is very biologically rich. You picked it because you thought it was remote and desolate and wouldn't anybody.' People live off of the resources here. And the winds keep the ridges swept so the Caribou are wintering there. The ocean currents are such there that make them very rich biologically. When they picked it, they didn't see that. They just went to a map and felt like this was far away from anybody that would complain about it, and there's nothing there. "We'll advertise it, and if we make a harbor there they can use it for the vast commerce with the orient.' They said there were vast resources that could be developed. There wasn't anything. Because all of my friends were biologists, and in all fields, were working up there from anthropology to biology, even the geologists said this was crazy. We were getting information from all of them and sending it right directly back to the Department of the Interior.

MR. KAYE: Reading through the Alaska Conservation Society news bulletin that you edited, and in some of the things you told me before, it seems like much of the effort that you guys expended was kind of a response or a reaction against the post-World War II economic and technological boom that we saw. Is that true, do you think?

MS. WOOD: Well, I can't speak for everybody. Bob Wheedon saw, as a biologist, what Fred Dean saw. Some of the others, this was their field of study. For those that went out there like Les Verick, he thought it was neat just to be able to go out there. And Bill Pruitt too. They were all close friends and neighbors. Each of them would sit and talk about it, and I suppose I was collecting information from them. I was the editor and sometimes I was the editor because with everybody else, they were biologists and they would have lost their jobs if they had…. Like Bob Wheedon. I was never the writer that Bob was. He was a giant both philosophically and in what he wrote and as a person. He was probably an Aldo Leopold in his own right. But he had a Ph. D. and he could write papers. I remember that I was President for a time because we couldn't find anybody else who wouldn't lose their job until they got Dr. Wood. Then, Dr. Wood was one of the promoters of Project Chariot and he was firing people who weren't… you know that history. Fred Dean said, "Let him do it, he can't shut us up if he's going to do all of that!" When he was through at the University, he ran to be head of the Borough. He was thick into political things. We felt like he couldn't say anything about us if this was what he was doing as President.

MR. KAYE: As far as the Arctic Refuge campaign, do you think that, as well, was kind of a reaction against what people saw happening in the 1950's and not wanting it to happen up there?

MS. WOOD: I can't speak for anybody else, but if you read what they said, then you got probably what they were thinking at that time. What you think of know, is what you think you thought then, at my age. It was a learning experience. Alaska is like a small town on a party-line. It's very hard for somebody to hide their dirty linen. You get involved in things that you wouldn't do outside. If I was in Seattle or New York I would be going skiing and liking the mountain and going and doing it and exploring to see what was over the hills but it wouldn't have been done as an environmentalist. I think that up here my best friends and neighbors were the leaders in the biology and conservation [movements]. I took Fred Dean's course in Resource Use. We were just beginning to realize that there was over-use. He said that when we've used up all of the land there was always the sea. That would be the last place that we would have, so we'd better not muck it up. The big thing now, that we are running on worldwide, even the National Geographic which never used to touch things like this, is water just to grow crops and drink.

MR. KAYE: In your testimony at the Senate Sub-Committee hearing that you attended here you told the Committee "that it's a psychological lift that the visitor gets just

knowing that beyond that ridge, across that valley, behind the mountain, there are no roads, power lines or people, just virgin country". What does that express about how you felt at the time about the special kind of wilderness experience that people ought to be able to have in what is now the Arctic Refuge?

MS. WOOD: As you were saying that, the episode comes to mind. We visited Les and Terry Verick when he was working on his Ph.D. at Colorado. They were taking care of a Science Camp, which was up in the mountains. We were outside to pick up a car for camp. We went on a ski trip where you climbed the ridges in the Rockies. I had never been in the Rockies before. It was an all day trip. We spent the day climbing up and had a run back down. We finally got up, after all day climbing on skis up threw and above the timberline. We got up to the crest of the mountains, and looked down, and there was a highway. It struck me that we had spent all day, to see what's on the other side of this ridge. And when we get over there, there's a major highway with cars going up and down. Still, where we were was great. It was wilderness. And I thought when I do that in Alaska, in McKinley Park you look down and see more and more…you never see any man made thing. Where I may have read Leopold and Thoreau and all of these people who had conveyed that we needed someplace more or less that man hasn't changed. You are meeting nature on it's own terms, whether as a scientist or just as a sightseer.

MR. KAYE: In your testimony you mention "nameless peaks". Mardy Murie and others talked about namelessness and not naming features. Do you think that is important for a place like Arctic Refuge? In several of your writings you mentioned that namelessness was an aspect of this place.

MS. WOOD: Yeah, because what happens when the USGS names them, or when we people name them, it's usually named after some political person or somebody's aunt or uncle. It's just putting man…I am not a religious person in terms of a… I might be spiritual, but not any the form of any one religion. Going around and putting man's names on it because it was a political guy like when they tried to change the name of Denali for a while. Naming things after a politician or somebody's girlfriend or wife or husband who had died [is silly]. One place in McKinley Park they named after a pilot who crashed and killed himself when he was doing something that was a damned fool thing in the first place. He gets a place named after him. That was Scott Peak. It had just had a number before. I think that the thing about it now, as I realize after being in the Arctic a lot, and exploring some of the rivers on foot, I can't pronounce them and I never learned to because they are Eskimo names. I can't tell anybody where I was because I can't pronounce it and I didn't even learn to pronounce it. I say, "Go find it yourself". If you are going to name something give it the native name because it was their map, it told you what it was. " This is the place that meets the other. The rivers meet here, and there's a lot of fish there." That's what the name means. There is a roadmap in their names for things. It's their guidepost. It tells you what it is as you probably well know. So, if you're going to name something, find out what the native name is first.

MR. KAYE: But what's lost to a name when you do name a feature after a …?

MS. WOOD: Well, if it already has one, and there is a reason why they had it… do it, instead of naming it after somebody that was never there, or for a political reason, or for your wife or girlfriend or some other reason. I think that naming it is…but you can't say that you don't want it to have a name because it's pretty hard to navigate. It's like trying to explain how to get to somebody's house if you don't have a street number or name. It'd be nice if it were like it was when I first got here. None of the streets were named. Mardy, when she was flying over a river in Katmi, asked the pilot what river it was, and he said he didn't think it had a name. He passed a note back. She quoted a poem by Robert Service who was a pilot.

MR. KAYE: He was in the Arctic.

MS. WOOD: I think that particular time she was in Katmi. And I know the river because I have been over it myself. She was up here when they were doing the [unintelligible] days when they were flying. Celia was doing the same thing. She and Celia were in the same plane crash with Abe Thayer [?] But I don't think any of them ever flew down there. I think it was one of the local pilots.

MR. KAYE: What did she or you think is lost to a name when you do start naming features after folks?

MS. WOOD: Well, the name usually doesn't have anything to do with anybody that was even there or saw it. I think that it's an ego thing, or a political thing.

MR. KAYE: Do you think that an ego-centered action is inappropriate in a place like that?

MS. WOOD: I remember when the boys made the traverse of Mount McKinley and then said that this was probably, and getting to the top wasn't even their aim, they just wanted to get to the head of the Ruth Glacier and explore all of that country behind there that nobody's even been in, just to see what was on the other side. And incidentally, they climbed to the top. Elton made the comment, I found it in a letter he had written to his wife when he was planning it, that this was probably the first expedition no one will ever hear about, that's how much they cared about publicity. Of course, he was killed on the summit and had a lot of publicity. That's why I never told anybody up in the Arctic when I was guiding. Ramon and I did a lot of exploring, mostly for places to take people. But we never… a lot of those that do have Eskimo names are very hard to pronounce. We purposely didn't learn them. Somebody else would take their people there. And the other thing was, somebody would come back and say that they had been to the headwaters of such and such and did this and this, and this and saw saw this and this, and

this. I used to say that why I liked exploring the tundra was because there wasn't any trails except for an animal one, and they go across the water. You can't wade like they can. Every time you take a step you are there. It isn't a destination. It isn't like when you hiking in the States. You go five miles to Lost Lake. In your mind, yes, you notice things along the way and you know it's a good hike, but you're not there until you get to the sign that says where you were going. But in McKinley Park, or in the Arctic people ask "Well, where are we going to camp?" And I tell them, "Well, I don't know. When we find a good place, and we're tired." The concept that we have to get "there", or "we haven't arrived", is bad. For instance, we had people when we rafted the Hula-Hula and you take out on a bench down, of course somebody and land, and it always changes because the river takes out where you can land. It isn't too far from Barter Island, and they come in and get you. So you wait there, and isn't very far away. It's probably a half an hour's flight. But then you're waiting. And it's always funny, because when they first land up at the headwaters out in the Brooks Range they say, "Oh, I could stay here forever! I don't care if I never leave!" These are business men and as soon as you get back and you're there, then they want to know when the plane is coming because they have to get back to a board meeting, or they have to do this, or, their wife is having a baby or something. They'll pace, wondering why the pilot wasn't there. I said, "probably because he'd busy somewhere else". Or else you could look at the weather and say, "I wouldn't want to go back with him, even if he came." It's bad weather. I remember doing this with guys who were from the Wilderness Society; it was a nice sunny day, but they just hadn't gotten "there", and I said, "Listen, instead of just pacing and asking me every ten minutes what will we do if they don't come, just look at your watch and go for twenty minutes in any direction. Then, sit down and stay for twenty minutes. Then come back and tell me what you saw." Then they would come back and say, "I know what you mean".

MR. KAYE: Mardy Murie talked about not naming places and wilderness more or less as a gesture of respect for the place.

MS. WOOD: That would be another way of saying it, like Mardy would. She is much more eloquent than when I said it.

MR. KAYE: Do you agree with that?

MS. WOOD: Oh yeah. It's very hard. Fairbanks didn't have any house numbers or street names when I first got here. You knew where the people lived. They lived next to the brown house, just past the white house. Now, those houses aren't even there anymore. I go to Fairbanks, I can't find anything because I don't know the street numbers. I find them by the buildings. If they took down the purple house, I've lost myself. I think that it would be silly to say, "I don't want any name", but I think that being able to have natural features, and if you give them names, see if there isn't a native name for it because that will tell you what it is. It told them. It told you, 'that's the

place where the fish come', or 'this is the place that runs into that', or 'this is the place where the biggest trees are'. That's what the names says. That's a map. That's a guide, and that fine. But just naming it after people as a political thing, or somebody you don't know that's never been there, that is. But there can be certain times when giving it a name after somebody who had, some particular reason, it was part of the story. If it's part of the story and somebody was there, first person; or you can't just say, 'I can't tell you where it is because it doesn't have a name', that's gets a little bit beyond. Because everybody did give it names, the natives did, but it tells a story, and what was there. It was the natural features. It was like you describing a ridge beyond the next one that's higher than the one before, or something like that. When you stop to think about it, I can see everybody's concept. But my concept is when I am taking people on hikes in the wilderness, is this, you don't know where we're supposed to get to because you haven't been there before. Or, well, shall we sit down here and have lunch and then we're there? Then you can look around and enjoy it!

MR. KAYE: Another word, or concept that I see repeating in your testimony and in your writings is "wildness". You use the word, "wild" country, "wildness". What's the essence of wildness? What is the significance of this place, not only scenic and has animals, but it's wild?

MS. WOOD: Well, you could do use wild in lots of different concepts as far as the dictionary goes. But I think in wildness, when you're thinking about the wilderness is a concept of the lack of technological manipulation by man. Wildness gets changed. The [unintelligible] surges can completely change the scenery in a very short period of time, from something that you could hardly see to something that was almost up to the road. Landslides blocked the Stony River and we had a three-quarter mile lake there for a long time. It was super saturated and from a lot of rain, and there might have been a little earthquake that disturbed it. Then when things are in the permafrost…. [neighbors approach, tape stops]

…it's meaning something that is hard to describe. Because it means that if you did it, and they say "Now, tell me what you mean by that". That gets to a place where each one has something that you can't put into words. It's a feeling. Everybody's feelings are a little different, maybe. Wildness is something to me, that hasn't been manipulated by man or any machines. It's like trying to describe to a guy that wants to climb a mountain on a snow machine why there's a difference between going there on skis or snowshoes or foot and going on a machine. He can't understand what you're talking about because he'd trying to see what he can make his machine do. Then, he wants to know, "Why do you do it?" First, it's a matter of tranquility, sanctuary and what your body can do, the challenge. It isn't to try to compete, change, or conquer. They use the word "conquer" in mountaineering. Most mountain climbers will say, "The mountain yielded". There's a difference.

MR. KAYE: For a place like the Arctic, when we see that word wildness used by you and others, is it just knowing that the place isn't changed or altered even though you wouldn't see an alteration, but just knowing that it's unaltered that's important?

MS. WOOD: I think the concept is, and we didn't realize it when we came up here, it was an adventure, but then you begin to see what has happened by altering things. And reflecting back you realize that this wasn't the way it was when you first got here. You get to thinking, "How am I affecting…?"

MR. KAYE: I'd like to go on and talk about some of the people you got to know and work with. You got to know many of the people that were instrumental in establishing this place and stayed here in your house where we are know. Tell me about Lowell Sumner. What's your impression of him? I know what he did.

MS. WOOD: He was a big kid! And they had a very good relationship with Collins. He called him "Doc" because he had a Ph. D., and I don't think Collins ever had one. But he was a kid. He was very funny. Aiden Murie had no use for airplanes. He didn't like them. He liked us, but he had to forgive us our sins. I told him that it was another way of being in another realm of wilderness up in the clouds and the weather. I agreed with him in that I would use a plane to find out where I wanted to go on the ground. But people in the Park Service didn't have planes except Lowell. And he had this old Luscome which always…I can remember him more than anything else with wrench working under the hood trying to find out what was wrong with it. Luscome's didn't have too high a grade compared to the Piper Cub and the like. But he loved that plane.

MR. KAYE: What about his ideas? He was considered a visionary in the Park Service.

MS. WOOD: I really don't know as when we talked about Lowell. At one time he was married to a woman who we knew, but they divorced. I think that she didn't think much of him as a husband. I liked Lowell for what he was as a person. I don't think we ever discussed things like…he was always working on his airplane.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about George Collins. He always referred to you and Celia as "the girls" when I interviewed him.

MS. WOOD: Because he was a lot older! As I said, Woody and I met him first when they came in to Katmi and he wanted to get down to the lake. We took him down in the motor boat. Then Celia met him when she was running the roadhouse for Wayne over in Kotzebue. He was staying there. He was the one who told her the it would be nice if there was someplace in McKinley Park except that "damned big hotel". He said that all the Park Service thinks about is getting up another big hotel. He felt that there should be some place where people could stay out in the wilderness longer, not for just a one- night-stand. Of course then, the concept for hotels in National Parks was to have a band, and

tennis courts and a golf course to entertain you while you were there. It was sort of the European idea of the Spa. He didn't think that, but at the same time he felt that there should be facilities, mainly so that people would stay in one spot, and then explore it on foot. And take it as it comes, you know, the weather and whatever. That resonated with us, and he talked to Celia about that. When she came back, and we when out with her to look for a place where Wing Airlines could have for people to stay overnight so that people could stay in the place. The resonated with Woody and Celia and I because we had all done it in Europe and found out that Europeans did that. It wasn't for wilderness, it was because you stayed in one spot because nature predominated, not in our concept of wilderness but you are in the mountains. You go walking and you touch it and you feel it and you smell it and you hear it. And not as a scientist, it was just something that you grew up doing. Up until World War II, they didn't have cars. You took a train or a bus with your family, and you stayed in a little inn. They didn't have the concept of tents so much. They had hut systems, and they didn't want tents because they didn't want people camping all over and leaving their garbage. This was in places like Switzerland and Austria. You walked, and you stayed in the huts. These were sometimes nothing but a great big bench with straw in it and everybody just slept in their sleeping bags. They were not fancy places. And there were the fancy places too. But even then, it was customary to either be skiing or walking.

MR. KAYE: One of George's concerns was that if this Arctic Refuge became…

MS. WOOD: Has he died now?

MR. KAYE: Yes, he died two years ago now.

MS. WOOD: That's right, you told me that. He was way in his nineties and he was still writing to us.

MR. KAYE: I think he was ninety-four. He had reservations about it becoming a Park because he was afraid of Mission 66.

MS. WOOD: I remember that. All of us were discussing about what the Refuge should be. And Fred could tell you this. So could Bob Wheedon and all of us discussed this. We probably talked it over with him too, but I don't remember the conversation. I just remember one of the questions was "who should manage it?' And we were very afraid of a National Park, because if it were, everybody would go there, and you'd have to have a big hotel and concessionary. Then there was the issue of the BLM. That would have been the best because they didn't do that. One branch of them was in the business of disposing of land and that's what they did. They sold land. So it came down to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The essence of that was not wilderness as far as geography was concerned as much as it was for the wildlife. I think it was Olaus Murie and Sig Olsen, whom we knew very well. He stayed at the camp. And Sig in the Wilderness Society

and was on the board when she was Chairman of the Board. I knew him well at camp by just talking to him. His concept of wilderness was lakes and wildness. But the feeling was that it losses what you set it aside for, if it becomes just destination for everybody to go to. That's when we could see, and Woody and I first thought "Well, gee, there's nothing here for anybody here in the Park, except for the little bus trip out to Pinecone Pass." There was a hotel from which you couldn't even see the mountain, and it wasn't even part of the Park. It isn't tundra. The concept that Switzerland has, to keep it's wildness is that people stay in huts, and you don't let them camp. You don't have any control over the garbage and having it cluttered up with campers in a little country like that, so they have to stay in the huts.

MR. KAYE: What else do you remember about George? What impressions did you get of Collins and his proposal for a last great wilderness?

MS. WOOD: He knew George. We used to tease him in California, when we lived in Mill Valley. He was quite a raconteur and hilariously funny. He had a sense of humor that wouldn't stop. When we first knew him, he was just that guy that worked for the Park Service that we were supposed to take in the motorboat to show him Katmi. He was sort of a Government Official. Celia got more chatty with him when he stayed over. When he stayed in Katmi, he stayed over at the Fish and Wildlife place. By trail it was about two miles from where Woody and I were in a tent. I can remember visiting him and I never laughed so much in my life! When you say him and his neighbors coming in to chat, and he had just has a serious operation for cancer in his throat. He pulled through it and they were coming to see him. I just remember him as absolutely hilarious. It was like that. I never laughed so much in my life, when he was with his friends telling stories. It wasn't always about wilderness. There were also letters that he wrote to us. Actually Celia probably knew him better because that was when she was high up in the Wilderness Society. She saw him when he was talking about these issues. When Woody and I knew him it was just like meeting somebody and have an interesting conversation with them.

MR. KAYE: How about Sigred Olsen? He played a role in establishing the Refuge.

MS. WOOD: Sig's son was one of our first board members of the Conservation Society. Sig., Jr. But he was stationed in Juneau and I didn't get to know him like I knew Bob Wheedon and the people who lived up here. Sig was… I remember us sitting down in the sun under the windows of the lodge discussing more philosophical things. I really can't remember any one thing that he said. But I do remember that he was rather wise. He was talking about his feelings about canoeing and paddling. I can't remember what he told me, and what I read in his books. I just remember that he was at camp when the Wilderness Society was having their annual meeting there in 1962. Olaus Murie was there, but he was pretty sick at that time. There was Sig, and we mostly discussed the problems in McKinley Park.

MR. KAYE: Had you read Sig's books at that time?

MS. WOOD: Not all of them, but some.

MR. KAYE: Some of them you had?

MS. WOOD: Yeah. See? I knew his son. I knew of him. And I always wanted to go on a canoe trip up in that country. So I read some of his books. It didn't strike me the way Leopold did. It was interesting and good. Celia really should be here because he was on her Board. She would give better in depth information. I can't think of any. If I didn't know Sig Olsen, what you I have remembered about him? I think I was more interested because he was Sig, Jr.'s Dad, and because I had read his book. Mostly we talked about the problems in McKinley Park because that was when we felt like their idea was to see how many people they could cram into it. He was telling me about the motor boat problem in his country. He liked canoes and wilderness. And he felt that motor boats would change wilderness. At that time, even the Park Service was at Boundary Waters. It was the Forest Service. First you developed facilities and the Forest Service were my heroes because they made the best trails. They used them for forest fire fighting. They didn't have them for cars. Sure, they sold lumber, but you didn't see that. Where I grew up at Lake Shallan was vast forest, Ponderosa Pine country. Everybody could use lumber, there wasn't a problem with that, but there was a marvelous trail system. It was because they used them to patrol the forest.

MR. KAYE: Tell me about the Muries. Olaus and Mardy came here.

MS. WOOD: I got to know "Ad" much more. He and Weezie were living at Park Headquarters when we first went. That winter is when they transferred out of there and went to the Tetons. We just learned from him. Then in the Park, we could use Igloo Camp Ground for our guests because nobody else was using it. It wasn't developed. It had pit toilets and that's all. The surroundings there were entirely different from at the other end of the Park where were. Within walking distance there was a lot of variety of different things. Olaus would come down and talk to us around the campfire at night. Or I would stop in and see him and ask him questions. I can remember Ad saying, "If I had to do it over again, I'd have been an agronomist. You start with the soils, that's the foundation of everything".

MR. KAYE: Oh really?

MS. WOOD: He said that he had gone backwards, beginning with the critters and then going to other things. Olaus was always very friendly. We'd see him when we were hiking around Igloo and we'd see that head of white hair. We'd go over there. One time there was a lamb that had just been killed by an Eagle. We went over and he gave a little talk about predators and prey in his very kindly way. Then he and Charlie Ott, a

photographer from town taking pictures in the Park and Ad; we'd meet them hiking. I remember one time they came hiking over the hill. I was out with a group from camp and we must have been stopped looking at one of those ponds, or doing birding or something. They came hiking over the hills. I don't what they had been doing but they were just having fun. Mel Lockwood, who was the photographer said, "I have a permit to do this". And he showed me the permit. It was from Ad. It said, "Mel can collect plants".

The Wilderness Society had their annual meeting in 1962 at camp. Sig Olsen and all of those guys were there for a week. I think I first met Mardy at a Sierra Club meeting down in Seattle. A friend of mine was hosting it at his house. He introduced me to Mardy. Olaus, I had met because he'd come up sometimes and of course he had down a lot of work in the Park in the 1920's. All I remember is that he and Ad were sitting under a tree. [end of side A]

Woody and I were out to get a car to bring back to camp, a new car. Celia had flown down I guess, to see her folks. We were invited to come to an Audubon Convention or meeting down in California. We were invited to come over and give a talk on Alaska and show some pictures. There, Olaus Murie was one of the featured speakers. I don't remember Mardy at that time, but it was Olaus. I had met him with his brother and sat down and had lunch with them. I knew his brother well, year after year. Mardy I first met to really know her, I guess, was when she was at camp and Olaus was very sick. In fact, that was the last year of his life. They were staying in the A frame and he would not accept a ride in the Jeep, even though he was a sick man. But he would get his camera out and take pictures of the moose on the lake and insist on wandering around and hiking a little bit. That was when they left and it was a very short time before he went in to the hospital. He had relapses, and this was one of them. When Mardy and Olaus took off to go up and stay in the Brooks Range. They were going up to see where, or what would be the best boundary for the western boundary of the Arctic Refuge, if they could get it established. That when they were up at first Lobo Lake and then Last Lake. Lobo Lake is drained now.

MR. KAYE: Did they come and stay here at your house for a visit?

MS. MURIE: They didn't stay here. The only ones that ever stayed here were Weezy Murie when she married again after Olaus died. She came up to visit and they stayed overnight here. The morning that they left to go up for that thing in the Arctic; I had known George Schaller because I sat next to him in class. And Brina had a breakfast party up there. They were leaving the next morning. I know the exact date because Rommey was six days old. She was born on May 8th. So it was in late May when they were leaving to go up.

MR. KAYE: So, you knew George Schaller?

MS. WOOD: Yeah, that was in one of Brina's classes that I took. She taught everything. In fact, George used to say that it would look funny on his resume when it showed that he had gotten all of his Botany, Zoology from Brina Kessel! She ran the University! And he was always hungry. He as always chewing on a stalk of celery or something in class. Then, the other guy that went up with them was Kreer. He was a close friend of Les and Terry's when they were running the science school and we were skiing with them. Woody knew him. They weren't in the same outfit, but they were both in the Mountain Division [Army] in Italy. We used to ski with him.

MR. KAYE: When Olaus and Mardie came back, in 1957 after their summer up on the lake, they met with a lot of groups here in Fairbanks; conservation groups and sportsmen's groups. Do you remember that summer? Or would you have been in camp?

MS. WOOD: I don't remember Olaus being along. I remember after he died, she came back several times. I remember when the Conservation Society had a big picnic for her at Larry Males. Then, she and a friend of hers had an old bus that they could sleep in. It was one of those convertibles. Her name was Mildred Capron. She took movies, and she was a neat lady. She and Mardy kid of ran around together after Olaus died. She lived in one of the cabins at Moose. They came up and toured with that thing on the road system, camping. And they came to our camp and parked down by where the cars were. They stayed around for a while. We used to visit at the Ranch, when we were outside to get a car we tried to visit if the weather was right. It was always wintertime and sometimes you couldn't get over the mountain. And if you did get over, you were afraid you might not get back. If the passes were good, we'd go over and see Mardy and stay there. When she was in Seattle, she was a friend of a close friend of mine. I would see her there. And sometimes I would just go and see her, she was staying with her mother when she was still alive. It was after Olaus died and I think she lived there for a while to take care of her mother who was in her late eighties. There's just little vignettes of Mardy and the times that we had stayed on the Ranch.

MR. KAYE: I've just a couple more things. One thing I noticed through your writing was that you talked about the pioneering philosophy in Alaska, in reference to the Arctic Refuge. It's almost as if, in your writings, you appreciate the frontier, but you didn't appreciate the pioneer attitude towards Alaska.

MS. WOOD: I think I used "pioneer" I would now use the word "frontier". Frontier attracts the best and the worst. And frontier means that you came up to exploit it, really. Whether is was the west, or the pioneers that first came over to colonize New England; a lot of them had to get out of where they were, or they were failures looking for a new opportunity. So you got the scoundrels. If you got there first, you could start the first business or exploit it. Rarely did you explore it, even though you get honored for being a pioneer. Or else you were escaping persecution like the pilgrims or the Mormons. I think Wally Stegner, who was at camp too. His writings were things that I really admired.

I didn't get to know him much. But he made the comment that frontier…. Oh, I can't remember…I'll find it for you. I used to have it posted up here. I think his concept of frontier, because he grew up in the frontier of southern Canada up in the wheat and cattle country. Then they moved down. He grew up in the 1920's in the harsh reality of the frontier. He said that with frontier, yes, you were opening up the country but in doing that you've lost what you came for. He makes that in a very nice statement and I'll see if I can find it for you. The frontier was the place that you come to find the things that you lose after you get there.

MR. KAYE: So I guess in that context, in your testimony, you didn't want the Arctic Refuge to be a frontier in that sense?

MS. WOOD: One of the other people I got to know was Jack Reid who was head of the Geological Survey. I flew him from McKinley Park back up here. He was the one who said, "I told the Muries that they should stay east of the Canning River, because right there, there's a big disconnect in the geology, and they'll find oil." They hadn't even found Prudhoe Bay then. But he said that they were going to find oil, and in pretty good amounts, somewhere. But if you stay east, then they'd fine little seeps. He said there were entirely different structures, and he explained it to me geologically; the chances of finding any big find there. It was not very much later that they found Prudhoe Bay. The other thing is when they were talking to Olaus and Mardy and Collins and everybody; their concept was to find a place that was big enough so it would have all of the biomes from the marine, the tundra, the alpine and the arboreal forest over the hill, and big enough so that your ecosystem wasn't just this little one. There also would be no village except Potomac, no mining, or mining claims. The timber wasn't big enough to cut. It had no resources that anybody was interested in, or had someone to suggest that there was until Prudhoe Bay. Even then, it was Jack Reid, who told me as I was flying him back, that he had just told Olaus that. They were going up to find the logical boundary, and it was originally a lot smaller. Then at some point it changed from the Range to the Refuge. The more described what it was. Then, I remember Stevens. He was saying that he wound' t give one bit of money for managing it. And we said, "Goody, Goody, Goody!"

MR. KAYE: That was Bartlett who said that, the Senator.

MS. WOOD: Was it!? I thought it was Stevens.

MR. KAYE: Stevens wasn't a Senator yet.

MS. WOOD: But I think he got it from Stevens. We had already started the Conservation Society and I remember we used to have a meeting each week. None of us had telephones where we slept. We always had a bag lunch at the University. Any body could come and sit in on it. It was very informal. We hadn't had a constitution yet.

Everybody just put on the table what they had learned. It was a gossip thing. And with all of the different disciplines, it was "well did you hear this?" or "Did you here that?" When we heard the comment "Not one cent!", we thought that was great!

MR. KAYE: You thought that would protect the area?

MS. WOOD: Yeah! A lot of times, when they manage it, that's what the problem is!

MR. KAYE: I see that Bartlett, according to your notes and editorials in the New Bulletin, as it was called then, met with you a couple of times. He was against the Refuge Proposal.

MS. WOOD: I remember that hearing. That's the only one I remember actually sitting around him. That's the one that is in the minutes of the Congressional Record. It's whatever I said there, you must have that. Because actually, Bartlett, who was an old miner himself, and pretty much a developer, was so polite and cordial. Nobody put you down or called you an extreme environmentalist. There were other people who did that. The miners didn't want the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society telling them how to run Alaska. Bartlett was very kind and very… It wasn't like when you used to have to testify in front of Stevens, and Don Young later. They would just insult you. I remember when I testified, and I had never done anything like that, I had a written testimony and then he asked me some questions. I remember him saying, "Mrs. Wood, do you know you have given an excellent testimony?" I thought, "Oh my gosh!" Because I didn't know what I had said, or …

MR. KAYE: Well, I have it here. He said, "Mrs. Wood, in my opinion, that was an exceptionally well prepared and well presented testimony."

MS. WOOD: Oh, it that what he said? I just remember that he complimented me on it.

MR. KAYE: Your words are extremely eloquent in describing the values in this place.

MS. WOOD: I think I read the whole thing. We just did it for… oh what's his name? The guy that was Fred Dean's boss at the University. He was in charge of the Pittman Roberts…

MR. KAYE: Funding.

MS. WOOD: Funding, and he was over Fred, and he was at the University. Very shortly after that he was taken back to Washington, D. C. What's the big Refuge near there. Well, he was made head of that, so he left here. But it was such a small town and a small community, you knew everybody. You knew everybody who came to visit.

MR. KAYE: So it was the Arctic Refuge campaign that kind of galvanized ACS?

MS. WOOD: I remember meeting in the hallway after we had had this testimony and the ones of us that I mentioned, we said that what we needed to do after hearing those people say that they didn't want "outside environmentalists" telling them how to run Alaska, was that …. We all were card carrying members of the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club and the Wildlife Federation. You paid your little dues of five dollars or whatever it was. Woody and I had been members of the Sierra Club since he was finishing his degree his Forestry at CAL, because they had those wonderful hut systems that you could use if you were members, for skiing. Mostly the Sierra Club was an outdoors club. It started in Yosemite. I remember Dave Brower. We were outside and Brower heard we were there and he asked us into his office. He said that he wanted to have a hike up in Alaska in McKinley Park. He wanted it for seventy-five people! Woody and I just said we couldn't take seventy-five people. He said, "You don't know how well organized we do our trips." They didn't even understand the situation. We said that you can't have seventy-five. They wanted to know if we'd run it. And we said, "Not with seventy-five people!" Then, when Celia was in the Wilderness Society, I said that they were sending up trips of fifteen people. I was guiding them up in the Brooks Range. Their program was to get more people into the wilderness so they could get more people to speak for it. I told Celia that I was embarrassed to have that many people up in the Brooks Range. I said, "I don't like to come in at Kartobik. The last time in, we had all our camping gear and they couldn't put on all of the first freight that they had been waiting for, for food. That's too many people to have in the wilderness!" Not only for what it does to the…it becomes a social occasion, rather that it being the wilderness there and you have companionship. It isn't just yack, yack, yack all of the time and you don't even notice where you are. The other thing is for a guide, is you get up there and you; Wing Airlines was running daily flights and we'd go up on that; you had to got to Kartobik and you had to get Wallady or somebody to fly you back up into the mountains for the trip. You have to go two by two because usually it was a small plane. You just don't have big planes. Then you have your grub. You have to divide up the people and they have never even been up in there before. Here you are sending them out, two by two, and have to sure that everybody has tents, food, gas, prime stoves and equipment whether you go with the first group or not, as they go. Pretty soon, you've got more out there than you've got here, but you've got to be sure that everyone has what they need. If you can't do it all in one day, or it takes two or three days because of weather, then you have people stuck. And they don't know that you have to do this. The thing is, if you're going to have small group, don't have too many people. Then you can all do the same thing. That was a horrible thing. And I told Celia that I didn't want any more people from the Wilderness Society. "I am embarrassed to come in with that many people". The Sierra Club was having twenty-five people then. I told them that I would meet some, not very often but once in a while. I would not take that many people on a trip.
It was as much for me, as it was for the wilderness. The main thing was, The Sierra Club, with seventy-five people? That's just a convention!

MR. KAYE: I am about out of questions. I just want to ask you if there is anything you'd like to say about the Arctic Refuge; looking back on the purpose, the value of it, or anything you'd like to say about it.

MS. WOOD: I spent from 1960 to what it is now, almost 2003. I am still sending letters and working. When Celia died, that was the last thing we were doing was putting up tacks to go in. She was on the phone to Debbie Miller asking who the Senators were who were on the fence. She was taking a list of them. She'd come back and we'd write our little things. We said that it was getting to be eleven o'clock and we'd go to Sam's; he's a geologist who has his own office and fax machine; we'll going over in the morning and send them, why don't we knock it off and go to bed? So we did. She went downstairs, and she never came up.

MR. KAYE: That was the last thing that Celia did?

MS. WOOD: That was the last thing. We were up until eleven o'clock at night. The last person she talked to was Debbie Miller. Debbie had been just back from there. We asked her "who were the guys who were on the fence?" We never did send them. I was writing mine, and she was writing hers. She said that she would type mine up and we'd get over to Sam's in the morning and use his fax. It was a weekend anyway. The next morning, I got up; usually she was the first one up. She was always hungry early and wanted to eat. Sometimes we ate together and sometimes we didn't. I thought, she'd just been back from being gone for a month outside. Then she'd come home and gone to one of Conservation Foundation meetings down in Anchorage. I thought well, I'll fix her a nice breakfast and not oatmeal, "I'll make her an omelet", because we didn't do that very often. I kept pounding on the floor and thought she was probably on the computer and couldn't hear me. I went down at about 10 o'clock, and there she was on the floor! Just looking like she had laid down to sleep! Her face was calm, and she had her clothes on. She had her [sounds like] bucks eye so she could see out her window at the view. You had to go down a little ladder. She had gone down that ladder. There was no anguish or any thing like she has choked on something or had a stroke or anything. It wasn't as if she had collapsed. She may have decided to so some meditation. She had on her grubbies, I don't know if she slept in them or whether it was a sweat suit. She may have gotten up to do some exercises. She had mentioned that she was out of shape and that she had better start doing some exercises. Then, "well, I'm a little tired, I'll just lie down for a minute", or something, I don't know. Who knows? But what a way to go!?
It was sure a shock! We had been skiing just a couple of days before. We didn't have much snow but we could go down to Smith Lake and ski around there, just to ski. I remember we'd had done that. We had made one trip on our trail up around Les Verrick's land and decided that there too.. we said, "Let's not do this any more." We agreed that unless we got more snow, there were too many roots and things sticking up and we'd better go together. You could trip and fall and break something and be out there. We

always did that individually. But we decided that until we got more snow, we'd plan to say together.

MR. KAYE: It's certainly interesting that that is the last thing she worked on.

MS. WOOD: The trip she made outside was sort of a pilgrimage. I thought we were going to go in the spring, together and do some hiking. I said that maybe we ought to think about the dates for the spring and she said, "Well, I've already made mine, I am going this fall". She said she knew just where she was going, and who she was going to see. She didn't say anything like, "why don't you come?" And we couldn't anyway, somebody had to close up it was wintertime. You had to get all of the garden stuff in and your wood chopped. And there is all the stuff you have to put away. Usually winter comes at the first of October with the snow. After that, it's going to stay.

MR. KAYE: I am glad I was able to talk to Celia. I wish I would have recorded her about her thoughts on the Refuge.

MS. WOOD: She would have had…She was top dog and head of a lot of …during the Nilka, she was on the Land Use Planning Commission for the feds. They sent plane in to land on Wonder Lake. You don't land on Wonder Lake. It was a Widgeon, I think. Who was bringing this in? I found out that it was somebody to come and talk to her. The next think I knew she had been selected to be one of the members of the Board for the feds. Before that she had been on the Board of the Wilderness Society and then, Chairman of the Board. She was with the feds when they were looking at all of the different areas. She spent the next two summers being mostly gone flying all over. That's when she was with Mardy. I was running camp. She'd pop in for two weeks and be off for two weeks, that got kind of old. We were trying to decide; she's got so many opportunities, do we want to run camp any longer? What do we do with this? It was like having a bear by the tail. If Wally and Jerry hadn't come along and made the offer, because they had worked for us and we knew who they were. We knew their ethics. Wally was perfectly capable of doing it and would do a good job. We would never be ashamed that we sold to him. Now, boy, has he got something by the tail? That place is worth so many millions of dollars, no one could afford to but except for maybe Princess Tours. But he would never sell it to them. Someone would put a hotel there. Then, we kept twelve acres and kept two cabins so we'd have a place where we could go through the Park. So we're landholders, too. And it's been assessed at half a million dollars just because it's got a view of McKinley. At most, it's twelve acres of permafrost except the one place where we've got the A frame. You are caught with that, and you're…. Celia willed her part of it to Romney. Wally almost had it through so we could sell our development rights to the Park Service. It means that you would never get any bigger. You could repair anything that needed repairing, but you could never have anything more. The Park Service would buy it, and we'd get some money and we could still operate it, but under this condition. Then, that would reduce what it was worth for anybody that wanted to make a million

dollars. And you know who stopped it? Mikowski. Individually. I have talked to people that were back there with the Department of the Interior. They said Mikowski was the one. They said he wants to have that opened up to big tourism. And he wants a road or a railroad into Cantishna. He's backing that. And he just personally did it to stop Camp Denali. And of course we wanted to do the same thing. Because Celia Hunter was one of the owners. That's really stopped us, because that's what we'd do. If we could see that whoever did buy it own it or when we bequeathed it, it never could be anything more than what it already it except to maintain it. We wouldn't even give it to the Park Service because they'd probably put a maintenance station there, a road crew at least, down at our place and get gravel out of it.

MR. KAYE: Well, I have taken a lot of your time. Is there anything you want to say finally, about the Refuge?

MS. WOOD: I keep forgetting that I am being recorded for posterity. But as I say, it's trying to, as this stage at the end of my life, trying to figure out what I thought about then. When you are looking at it in retrospect, and you get mixed up with how feel now and how you felt then.

MS. KAYE: How do you feel now?

MS. WOOD: Well, I'm just glad I was born when I was. Boy, I have… when I see what happened with the elections, and everybody that got elected. The programs are saying that we've got these vast resources here, we don't need to have taxes, we don't need to do anything but develop them. Mikowski says that we should start with roads. You build roads into the wild and get all of the land in private ownership so private business can develop it. You'd think they'd have learned something from Enron and that stuff. Every day you read the paper and there is somebody exposing these big corporations. His idea that all you do is get the roads to them and it there. You get more fish and more timber and more oil. But you've got to make access. So you build more roads in the forest and you make…then you stop and limit any restrictions on private enterprise that's doing this. And then, Alaska will be rich, and people will be rich, and we'll all be prosperous. We'll get bigger and bigger with more growth, and more money. That's his concept. He went broke running a Bank! Am I still on here? I don't know what he knows about the economy!

MR. KAYE: So.,.

MS. WOOD: By the way, have you read…if you want to talk economics…you know, that's how we stopped Rampart Dam, based on economics alone. We couldn't talk about the ducks. In fact when Celia was in the debate with the guy who was a Senator, he shook his fist and said that she was talking about ducks and geese and moose, and you're not talking about those things, you're talking about economics! And that's not your field!

She was proving that it was not economical to dam the Yukon. And that power, by the time they got it down there, wouldn't be very cheap! In fact, an economist who was from Michigan and very well known, did a study on it right after that. That's what he stopped it. And we really broadcast that. He said the same thing we were saying, but he did it as a scientific economist and not as an environmentalist, and that's what stopped that.

MR. KAYE: Let me ask a final question. You played important roles in the Refuge campaign, the Rampart Dam, Project Chariot, I mean your whole Alaskan life, at least in the last few decades, has been leadership roles in conservation. Why have you spent so much time and energy?

MS. WOOD: Well we didn't. If I hadn't been doing other things, going on tangents, first flying around the country and then with Camp Denali. Let me just make this statement; In those days environmental concerns came one at a time, and they were black and white. If you did a little homework, and you didn't have to do it very far because you knew everybody that was connected with it, and was there and saw it and made the decisions. That was what Alaska was. Now, your issues come multiplied, and they come in many shades of gray. You don't always have access to know. You don't happen to have just had dinner with the guy that was the key person in that, so it's become much more complicated. That's why the Alaska Conservation Society, in 1980, still had money and some influence but Bob Wheedon was asked by Hammond to be an advisor. And Celia had a chance to go back to Washington, D. C. and be head of the Wilderness Society. There were so few of us left to run it. And it was getting so we realized that you couldn't operate out of living rooms. You had to have fax and Xerox machines. You had to have telephones and an office and people working there. You couldn't do it on just volunteers. Before, it was kind of fun. It was kind of like David slaying Goliath. All you had to have was…then, people could hitchhike to a meeting and make a speech. But it was so easy to get the facts and know somebody that was there. It was not like it is now. That's why we decided to go out of business while we were ahead. We divided up the money that we had and gave it to the centers that were starting up in Juneau. That was an organization of a lot of different environmental organizations. That was Seeak. But we started first up here with Environmental Center, and then Seeak and Anchorage was the last one to come in, but they have ACE, for the same reasons. So we divided all of the money between them. And then there were small organizations that were chapters of ours. We started out just in Fairbanks. They people would write us and say that they had this "little bonfire" down here, well we felt like they knew more about it than we did, so we told them to start their own. We had a lot of organizations that are still going as a group, independently. They aren't part of the Seeak, but I guess they cooperate with them. This all started because they were going to log their favorite recreational river that everybody goes hunting and camping and fishing on. And they said, "Not in our back yard!" They knew the issues, and we told them to fight, and they did. That's what happened with all the others. We never went out trying to start one. They would write

us and ask what we could do about it up there. And we'd tell them just organize like we did. We became, with all of these satellite ones. But it got too big to handle. And you have to have all of this money now. And you have to have all of this machinery. And you have to have all of these people that work, that give their lives to it. You can't just operate it as a bunch of volunteers out of living rooms and kitchens. So that's the difference. And you ask, "Why did you do it?" It was fun! And it was interesting, and you met the neatest people.

MR. KAYE: But you've continued on, and you've done so much more than just about anyone!

MS. WOOD: I think that maybe I am a "has-been". Celia loved it. Oh gad, I wanted to be out skiing, hiking. I wanted to be out smelling the flowers instead of writing about them. I can't spell very well. And I purposely haven't learned how to do a computer. I don't want to spend my life down there with email. Regular mail is bad enough. Camp was part camp, and part…Well you know we had an educational thing going on while you were out. You were a bird expert! The people that came there. We were asked how we could stand those tourists. Some of them were a pain in the neck, but very few. I met some of the my best friends, and people who had that as their field who I could from. I learned as much from the guests as I taught them. I think it was a joy, just going out and discovering things together like I did. Discovering and learning new things, and being out in it! I wanted people to understand…they all thought you had to see a wolf and a bear and a caribou migration, and then they could go on to the next thing, they had been there, they'd done it. And if they don't see it, they thought it wasn't all what it was cracked up to be. The thing is, like I used to tell my people who were waiting for the plane to come; just go out, and sit down and see what you see. Quit pacing around when the plane is going to come. If you don't get back to your board meeting, well, you got trapped in the Arctic! Wouldn't that make a good story?! The plane didn't come, and there we were, abandoned! I have had on my trips wonderful, interesting people. And I have learned as much as I have probably given. So that's why I could do it. And what would you be doing if you weren't doing that? You'd have to go and get a job. In the War because I had good eyesight I could qualify to fly all of those fighter planes; if I hadn't, I would have been making airplanes like everybody else was. People your age don't know what a war is, and we didn't get bombed. We didn't have to go down in the tunnels or take our family down under ground during a bombing raid. But, your father could only get enough gasoline for his job. And it was rationed. All ski and other resorts were closed. There wasn't any pleasure trips. You didn't drive a car to do that. There was a war on! There was a lot of things you couldn't get. I happened to be flying and that was as good a way as any to spend the War. But here, they just don't understand. Certain people went off and got killed or maimed and fought a war, but business was good because they could sell a lot of things during the war, until after the war, and then you have a depression. The big Depression was because of World War I. You destroy a lot of things, and you have to make up for it. People are out of jobs. Then you find out that you've got to do

something about the people who got wounded and take care of them. Social services go up. During the war, there's jobs because half the people are off fighting it and the others can get the jobs and get paid. People are selling things. Munitions and manufacturers and commerce is good. Then you have a depression afterwards. I think people that grew up since World War II have never known what it is to be rationed. They don't what it is to really have somebody that you love get killed. It was just poor people who went off and fought Viet Nam, mostly. Bush has certainly never experienced that, or he wouldn't be so hot to get into another war. I think that that is why people voted the way they did, because they promised growth and prosperity. If you read Lester Brown's book *Ecoecomonics*. If you go into the economics of this instead of saving the wilderness; and it's not that saving the wilderness isn't important, but I think that now we always talk about prosperity and improving the standard of living. I think that because there are so many of us, and resources are diminishing, that we are going to have to shoot for sustainability. You don't have to starve to death in the dark to do it. We were just as happy when were in the cabin that didn't have anything. We thought it was great. It was warm, and it was our house! I think that if you don't get sustainability, the next thing is going to be survival. That's not very pretty. It won't be the big corporations that has and gets, it's going to be everybody out for yourself to try and get enough eat and enough water and enough everything! We don't have to do that. We can have a good, high standard of living, a high standard of life and have a very high well being index, which should be the real judge of your economy, if we start now to shoot for sustainability and not for prosperity where them that has, gets, and for the others that's tough. Let them eat cake! In any case, that's the way I see it now, and I'm not going to be around to find out how it all comes out. But I always seemed to be the right age, at the right time, in the right place. Just the luck of the draw, and I was very very grateful for that. Where I grew up, I always felt that anybody who didn't live in a small town or on a farm had a deprived childhood. Any body who wasn't free to roam around the woods….I don't like rules and regulations either. But as soon as you have growth you have to have them. We didn't have a stop sign in Fairbanks when I got here. I could tell if a car was coming, so could everybody else! We didn't hit moose, and we didn't hit each other. Now, we have stop lights and you have to wait for it to go through all it's things. It takes me much longer to get to the airport than it used to! If you didn't, you'd have nothing but crashes. I think that we have been too comfortable, it's been too easy. If you weren't prosperous, you could go to drugs and make money there. Or, forget about it all if you were using them. We've got a whole population, which is put too much stock in growth and prosperity, and profits and fraud. If you can't make it one way, you'll make it another. And I think, even as a child growing up in the Depression, there wasn't violence. When I was a kid I could wander all over town and talk to anybody. There have always been mean people. There have always been robbers. Murder was something that you hardly ever heard of in your town. We didn't know what that meant. I think we've lost a sense of integrity and too many people have walked on nothing but sidewalks and cement in their whole life. Maybe they are good people. And they think they are comfortable in their condominium and their job, but they have never know what it is to walk on earth.

And they never notice things like that. Even driving a car. It's all road rage now. You do the flying by push buttons. You have to notice what's under you! Like you and I learned! You have to navigate on the ground and be conscious of where you are and where you'd put it if that engine quit! Now, they don't, they just dial where their destination is and doing pay any attention.

MR. KAYE: Well, our tape is almost done.

MS. WOOD: Well good.

MR. KAYE: I want to thank you.

MS. WOOD: And that's the end of that speech and I'll get back to sorting my stuff.